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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 007090

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2017
TAGS: PREL EAID PGOV PHUM IZ IN
SUBJECT: INDIAN ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert O. Blake, Jr.
for reason 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Indian Joint Secretary for the Americas in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar called DCM November 5, to inform the USG about the specifics of Indian assistance to Iraq to help prepare for the upcoming Iraqi elections. Jaishankar said India is offering a 3-part assistance program:

-- The Indian Election Commission will provide training for thirty Iraqi election officials for a period of two weeks.

-- India will commit five million dollars to the International Democracy Fund under the aegis of the UN.

-- The Indian Election Commission also will offer to assist Iraq to draft regulations for the conduct of the Iraqi Elections. Jaishankar said India is prepared to invite Iraqi Election Commission officials to India to consult on the draft regulations, if that would be helpful.

¶2. (C) DCM welcomed news of the Indian offer and asked whether India had communicated the specifics of its program to the Iraqis. Jaishankar responded that thus far India had only communicated with the United States and the UN on this matter. DCM urged Jaishankar to have the appropriate MEA officials contact the Iraqi's directly.

¶3. (C) DCM also asked whether India intended to make its offer public. Jaishankar responded that an oblique reference to the assistance had appeared for the first time publicly in Prime Minister's Manmohan Singh's congratulatory letter to President Bush. Given the continued sensitivities in India about Iraq, Jaishankar indicated that it would be best from India's domestic political perspective to keep news of India's program in a UN context. He requested that the United States not make public news of India's electoral program, so that India could manage how and when to do so.

¶4. (C) Comment: India has undertaken this Electoral Assistance Program primarily as a gesture to the United States. As Jaishankar's comments reflect, any kind of assistance by India to Iraq is likely to be sensitive here and subject to criticism by Left and others. Mission requests that all addressees respect the GOI's request that the U.S. not publicize news of this offer until the GOI itself has done so.

¶5. (U) Minimize considered.
MULFORD